



**BRIEFING: APRIL 21, 2016 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #6**

**TO:** Chairman Richard and Board Members

**FROM:** Ben Tripousis, Northern California Regional Director

**DATE:** April 21, 2016

**RE:** Update on the Merced to Sacramento Project Section

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**Background**

The 110-mile Merced to Sacramento project section of the high-speed rail system was identified by Proposition 1A as part of Phase II for implementation of the statewide program. As such, work in the corridor has focused on stakeholder engagement, alignment alternatives analysis, and planning. The Merced to Sacramento section will operate through Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties. There are proposed station locations in Merced, Modesto, Stockton, and Sacramento.

This is an information item only. Staff work efforts on this Project Section are being presented to the Board for its information, but no Board action is involved at this time.

**Discussion**

Since 2013, the Merced to Sacramento project section has advanced in both corridor planning and project definition. The work is being performed under a multi-year, \$1 million regional consultant contract. Under this contract, the Authority continues to advance the design, analysis, and refinement of alignment alternatives.

During the last year, staff has worked to identify the local stakeholders and entities that must be engaged to move planning efforts forward. The focus of the outreach activities was to initiate communications and provide updates to local stakeholders. The goal of the outreach efforts was to maintain and garner support for the development of the high-speed rail system in the Merced to Sacramento project section.

Concurrently, other agencies are advancing planning efforts that will support and enhance the Northern California passenger rail network, including the California State Rail Plan. The Merced to Sacramento planning work is being performed collaboratively with these efforts. Upon completion it will reflect these plans and inform other ongoing studies. A key element of the work in this section is to coordinate the planning, construction, and operations of Capitol

Corridor, San Joaquin, Altamont Commuter Express, and high-speed rail services to expand an efficient regional rail network.

### **Next Steps**

- Continue to advance corridor planning and project definition.
- Coordinate with local agencies to identify opportunities for concurrent investments that will provide immediate benefits and could facilitate future high-speed rail.
- Work collaboratively with partners to advance the Northern California Unified Rail Service.
- Continue to collaborate on the statewide rail modernization efforts led by the State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and the State Rail Plan led by Caltrans.

### **Attachments**

– Merced to Sacramento Project Section Map

# Exhibit 1. Merced to Sacramento Project Section Map

